



TESTIMONY OF Robert Brex, Executive Director, Northeast Communities Against Substance Abuse (NECASA) on behalf of Connecticut Prevention Network (CPN)

CONCERNING

HB 5030- AN ACT MAKING ADJUSTMENTS TO STATE EXPENDITURES FOR THE FISCAL YEAR ENDING JUNE 30, 2015.

Appropriations Health & Hospitals Subcommittee Hearing, February 18, 2014

My name is Robert Brex and I am the Executive Director for NECASA, the RAC for the 21 towns of the Northeast Corner of Connecticut. On behalf of the Connecticut Prevention Network (CPN) I want to offer testimony concerning the budget and the need for additional funding for regional action councils. CPN is an association of the state's 13 community partnership Regional Action Councils (RACs) that work to provide every community in Connecticut with education, training and advocacy for substance abuse prevention.

CPN receives about \$300,000 or \$22-28k per RAC to implement the federal Partnership for Success (PFS) grant. On June 30, 2014, the PFS grant is set to expire, severely hampering the ability of RACs to provide evidence-based, outcome-driven prevention planning, which is an integral part of the RAC function. The PFS grant is awarded by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration Center for Substance Abuse Prevention and administered by the Department of Mental Health & Addiction Services.

Potential Impacts of Lost Funding:

Staffing

- Reduced hours for some staff and elimination of some positions directly linked to ensuring quality standards for the essential functions listed below
- Reduced resources to support the maintenance of key community relationships critical to:

- ensuring comprehensive data collection
- engagement of key community members in the data analysis
- implementation of evidence-based prevention strategies

Data Collection and Evaluation

- Reduced capacity for collection and analysis of data critical to informing and evaluating prevention activities throughout the State
 - Fewer surveys and focus groups of youth and adult community members
 - Reduced staffing resources to provide technical assistance to Local Prevention Councils for local data analysis and development of effective data presentations used to drive community change through evidence-based, outcome-driven prevention planning
 - Reduced resources to support creation of regional epidemiologic profiles required by DMHAS to provide planning data to state and local communities

Programming

- Elimination of local public awareness efforts such as comprehensive media campaigns created by RACs
- Reduction of training programs offered by RACs to local communities
 - Mental Health First Aid /Youth Mental Health First Aid Training
 - Professional development for prevention professionals and youth-serving professionals throughout the state
 - Current Drug Trend Awareness Training

The direct impact to NECASA of this lack of funding will be an inability to fund or collaborate on some community programs, the inability to do the advanced planning for both treatment and prevention and possible elimination of our annual public awareness efforts including anti-drinking and driving radio ads during major holidays.

Solution:

The Connecticut Prevention Network requests an additional \$300,000 from the Pre-Trial Account be included in the FY 2015 budget (See P.A. 13-184, Sec. 30). Note that this funding does not come out of the General Fund. Without this funding, much needed prevention staff and resources will be lost leaving a gap in providing data and services to local communities looking to prevent substance abuse and offer other services.